

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT: Seguin et al.

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EXAMINER: Unknown

FILED: 01/24/02

FOR: TEST TUBE WITH DATA MATRIX CODE MARKINGS

Assistant Commissioner of Patents
 Washington, D.C. 20231
 Sir:

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Prior to examining this application on the merits, please add the following claims 22-23:

22. A test tube, comprising:

a tube body of unitary construction comprising an enclosed sidewall and an integral bottom that together define a tubular container having an open top, wherein said bottom has a planar exterior surface upon which machine readable data is encoded within an opaque coating deposited onto said planar exterior surface to uniquely identify said test tube.

23. The test tube of claim 22, wherein said opaque coating comprises:

a first layer of light colored opaque material deposited onto said planar exterior surface;

and

a second layer of dark colored opaque material deposited onto said first layer, with select portions of said second layer having been removed to define said machine readable data.

1 24. The test tube of claim 22 wherein said machine readable data is encoded by
2 exposing said coating to a coherent light source.

1 25. The test tube of claim 23 wherein said machine readable data is encoded by
2 removing selected portions of said second layer to expose underlying portions of said first layer.

1 26. The test tube of claim 25 wherein the selected portions of said second layer are
2 removed by exposure to a coherent light source.

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1 27. The test tube of claim 23 wherein said first layer is white and said second layer is
2 black.

1 28. The test tube of claims 23 or 27 wherein said first and second layers comprise metal
2 foils.

1 29. A method of manufacturing a test tube, comprising the steps of:
2 providing a tube body of unitary construction comprising an enclosed sidewall with and
3 open top and an integral bottom with a planar exterior surface;
4 applying an opaque coating to said planar exterior surface; and
5 encoding machine readable data within said opaque coating.

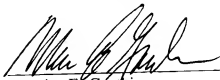
1 30. The method of claim 29 wherein the application of said opaque coating comprises
2 the steps of:

- 3 a) depositing a first layer of opaque material onto said planar exterior surface; and
4 b) depositing a second layer of opaque material onto said first layer, wherein said first
5 and second layers are of contrasting colors.

1 31. The method of claim 30 wherein said first and second layers comprises metal foils
2 deposited by hot stamping.

1 32. The method of claim 29 wherein said machine readable data is encoded by exposing
2 selected portions of said opaque coating to a coherent light source.

Respectfully submitted,



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